

THE CHIG BDAG ORGANIZATION OF RKANG TSHA HERDING COMMUNITY, MTSHO SHAR (HAIDONG) CITY, MTSHO SNGON (QINGHAI) PROVINCE, PR CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Rkang tsha (Gangcha) Village is located in Rkang tsha Tibetan Township, Ya rdzi Za lar (Xunhua Salar) Autonomous County, Mtsho shar (Haidong) City, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, PR China. In 2019, this pastoral community consisted of 317 households and 1,559 residents and was managed by the Rga po and Tshogs 'dus community groups overseeing pastureland, livestock, seasonal migration, and assigning religious activities through non-government organizations such as the *tshod 'dzin rga po* and *chig bdag*. Rkang tsha Monastery, village leadership, "Tiger Day," religious activities (Zlog chen and Dbyar ston), and preparing *tshams zhu* for high *bla ma* and leaders are also described.

KEYWORDS

Mtsho sngon (Qinghai), Rkang tsha Village, Rkang tsha Monastery, *tshod 'dzin rga po*, *chig bdag*, Tibetan pastureland management, seasonal migration, local Tibetan organization

INTRODUCTION

I grew up as a herder in Rkang tsha (Gangcha) Village situated in Rkang tsha Tibetan Township, Ya rdzi (Xunhua) Za lar (Salar, Sala) Autonomous County, Mtsho shar (Haidong) City, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, PR China. I never questioned how my community supervised our pasturelands and seasonal movements because it all seemed so normal. Later, some of my new Tibetan friends were surprised when I said that my home community did not divide grassland among households. Their home pasturelands had been divided and fenced into herding communities in Mtsho sngon (Qinghai), Kan su'u (Gansu), and Si khron (Sichuan) provinces.

There were different views on this practice. Some said, "It's not good to divide. Division harms the environment, ecology,¹ and human relationships." Others countered with, "You'll never be rich if you don't divide the grassland among individuals."

When I explained how my community manages our shared grassland and seasonal events, my friends reflected that they once had a common grassland and similar pastureland management systems. However, such systems are now disappearing. That left me wondering why our grassland was not divided among individuals and what system is used to manage the grassland? Also, who are the managers, and more fundamentally, why does my home community continue herding today? As I set out to answer these questions, I discovered that the *chig bdag* organization (hereafter: CB) was critical in assisting how my home community manages herding issues.

This paper examines CB in terms of its establishment, management, and obligations. I also introduce Rkang tsha Village, Rkang tsha Monastery, and Rkang tsha Village leadership, which are integral to CB. Besides, I draw on interviews with residents, monks, and middle-aged men who are

*Blo bzang (Luozang). 2020. The Chig bdag Organization of Rkang tsha Herding Community, Mtsho shar (Haidong) City, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, PR China. *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 60:132-160.

¹ Livestock are unable to move across large areas because of grassland division among individuals, creating problems for production, ecological system challenges, a limited ability to respond to natural disasters, and ecological risks as a result of livestock repeatedly trampling and overgrazing small areas (Li 2019:1).

leaders and have participated in CB. Finally, I also provide relevant images of Rkang tsha Village, CB, and religious activities.

FIG 1. CB location.

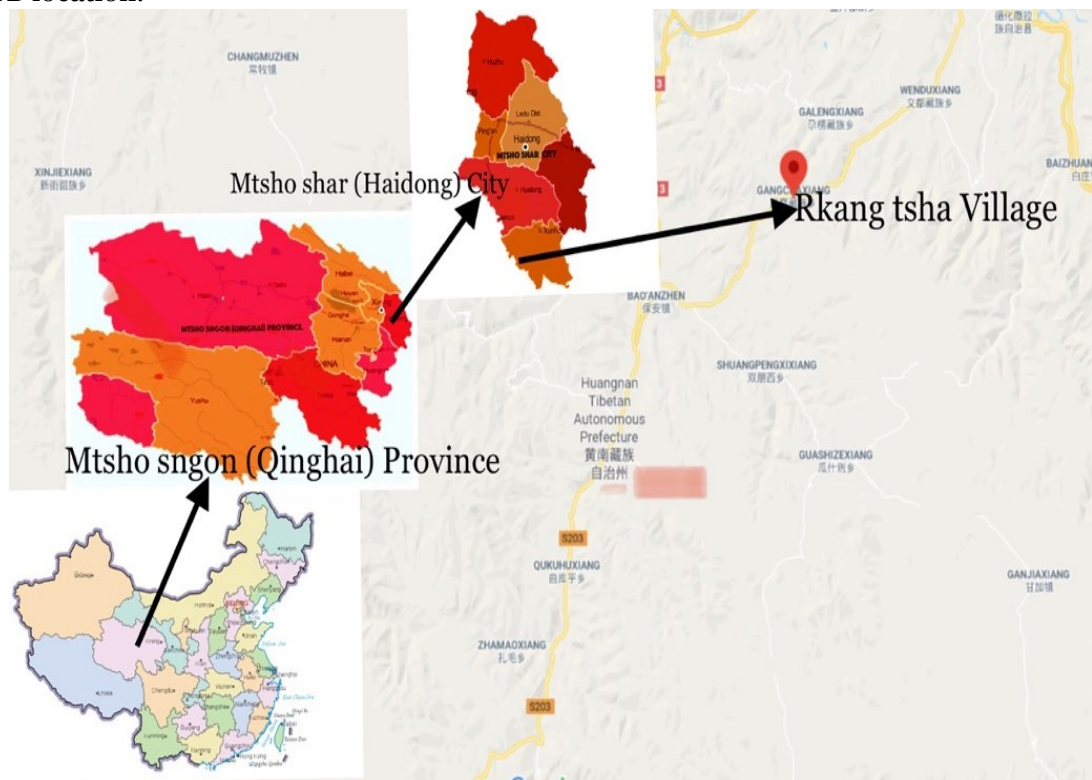


FIG 2. Map of Ya rdzi Za lar (Xunhua Salar) Autonomous County.¹



¹ An edited version of <https://bit.ly/3fZlIPE> (accessed 11 May 2020).

RKANG TSHA VILLAGE

Rkang tsha Village (latitude 35.699471, longitude 102.230797)¹ is thirty-five kilometers from Ya rdzi County Town and has 317 households² and 1,559³ residents. The average altitude is 3,200 meters.⁴ The village's area and grassland account for 344,000 *mu* (22,945 hectares/56,657 acres).⁵ Agropastoral communities of Rma lho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture are west of the village. Southeast of the village is the herding community of Rgan gya, Rgan gya (Ganjia) Township, Bsang chu (Xiahe) County, Kan lho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Kan su'u (Gansu) Province.

Consisting of three villages - Kha so, Zog pa, and Rkang tsha - Rkang tsha Township is the only herding community in Mtsho shar City. Neighbor villages refer to Rkang tsha Village as "Gser kha'i rkang tsha." About three centuries ago, the village's original herding families migrated from Gnya' skya ro rkang tsha in contemporary Khri kha rkang tsha, Khri kha (Guide) County to Gser kha Valley to avoid conflict with the Rkang tsha Tribe. The families lived in Gser kha Valley for two generations before moving yet again.

After a group member killed a Tho rgya's villager in Reb gong County, they migrated to Gcan tsha thang in Gcan tsha (Jianzha) County, where they stayed for some twenty years until they negotiated with Tho rgya Village and agreed to give Gser kha Valley to Tho rgya Village as compensation for killing their community member. Though some families settled in Gcan tsha County, most families migrated to Gser kha'i nyag ga, east of the Gser kha Valley - the site of Rkang tsha Township in 2020.

For a time, this herding community had little pasture. Ka ring Community offered grassland, and Bla ma lha gzhis⁶ and his followers joined Rkang tsha Community and shared his extensive grassland. Later, the fourth Gser kha incarnation *bla ma* bought a large piece of land from Bis mdo (Wendu) Community for Rkang tsha Village. The village's pasture was then divided into seasonal pastures.⁷

Spong bo thar, Ar lcags, Khag dkar, and Rog po tribal members live in Rkang tsha Village. In the past, the head *dpon po* 'chiefs' were from the Khag dkar Tribe. Though other tribes had their own chiefs, they obeyed the Khag dkar Tribe *dpon po*. However, the death of Dpon po blo bzang and his two sons in 1958 ended this model of tribal leadership.

Nevertheless, tribal affiliation continues to be important, particularly during weddings, funerals, and religious rituals. For example, if a family holds a wedding, members of the same tribe come and help prepare and present gifts to the family.

Rkang tsha Gongshe 'Commune' was established in 1959, and Rkang tsha Village was divided into five *tus*⁸ ('*du*' 'brigade'). Each brigade currently has thirty to sixty households. For instance, Brigade Five has around thirty-three households, and Brigade Four has around sixty households. Each

¹ See <https://bit.ly/2Clfdsv> (accessed July 10, 2020).

² I obtained this 2019 count from my family's *sde ba'i ming tho* 'name list of all community members'. My family uses this list to offer bread, tea leaves, and a bottle of oil to every community family during the *chos* 'religious' ritual.

³ On 22 October 2019, a government officer reported this population count during a ceremony in Rkang tsha Village commemorating the Seventieth Anniversary of the founding of modern China.

⁴ See <https://bit.ly/2Ob4J1m> (accessed 23 November 2019).

⁵ On 22 October 2019, a government officer reported this land area during a ceremony in Rkang tsha Village commemorating the Seventieth Anniversary of the founding of modern China.

⁶ Bla ma lha gzhis was a reincarnation *bla ma* with his own land and resident followers.

⁷ This oral history is commonly shared in Rkang tsha Village.

⁸ Before 1958, the community was divided into Rgyan phyogs One, Rgyan phyogs Two, Rgyan phyogs Three, and Rgyan phyogs Four.

brigade has a leader (*tus sgren*g or *ru gtso (dui zhang)* 'brigade leader'), who announces village leaders' decisions to brigade members.

Rkang tsha villagers herd yaks, sheep, horses, a few goats, and a few yak-cow hybrids. They seasonally move from pasture to pasture and, during this time, they live in tents.

In the past, herders used yak-skins to make shoes, bags, and ropes; yak-hair to make tents, bags, and ropes; sheepskin to make robes and pants; sheep stomachs to fetch water and as butter containers; and wool to make raincoats, carpets, and hats. However, at the end of the twentieth century, herders began using plastic containers and bags and purchased shoes, clothes, hats, and robes from markets rather than making such items themselves. By 2019, very few people knew how to make clothes, bags, robes, shoes, and hats from yak-skins, sheepskins, yak hair, and wool.

When moving historically, pastoralists used yak-hair bags and sheepskin bags to store wheat grain, wheat flour, barley, roasted barley flour, butter, dried cheese, dried meat, *thang ka*,¹ scriptures, deity images, clothing, bowls, spoons, pots, and teapots. Black yak-hair tents, tent poles, and bags were loaded on male yaks at that time.

Today, Rkang tsha Village pastoralists use motorcycles, hand tractors, and cars for transportation during seasonal movement. They live in canvas tents and *phyar sbus* (the four corners of the tent are fabric - not canvas - while the remainder of the tent consists of yak-hair fabric) in summer, autumn, and spring. Certain families use their black yak-hair tents to make *phyar sbus*, and a few families actively use black yak-hair tents in summer. However, in winter, they live in brick houses in the winter pasture. Some black yak-hair tents that are put in storage during this period decompose.

Summer and autumn are optimum times for pastoralists to produce milk, butter, cheese, and yogurt and buy and sell livestock. Historically, herders traded meat, dried cheese, yak hair, sheep wool, and leather for grain, fruit, cooking oil, and salt with neighboring farming communities and merchants who came to Rkang tsha Village. From the 1990s, this began changing. By 2019, goods were rarely exchanged. Instead, some Rkang tsha villagers operated shops in the Township Town and sold butter, yogurt, milk, and bread to Salar, Hui, and Han Chinese. Although Rkang tsha pastoralists maintain a largely pastoral lifestyle, their lives continue to be dramatically impacted by the modern, market-centered world.

¹ A Tibetan religious image with a silk cover that is painted, appliqued, embroidered, or printed and traditionally kept unframed and rolled up.

FIG 3. Brigade Four, Rkang tsha Community in a summer pasture (2016, 'Jigs med dpal ldan).



FIG 4. Brigade Two, Rkang tsha Village camps around the Township Town in their autumn pasture. The brick buildings are township government offices, the township primary school, a health clinic, a bank, a grain supply center, and a veterinary station (1998, Dge 'dun rgya mtsho).



RKANG TSHA MONASTERY

Rkang tsha dgon dg'a ldan chos 'phel gling 'Rkang tsha Monastery' is fifteen kilometers from Rkang tsha Township Town. The first Gser kha reincarnation *bla ma*, Gser kha bsod nams rgya mtsho (1690-1780),¹ founded the monastery in 1745² upon returning from thirty years of study in Central Tibet. Established as a *sgrub grwa* 'practice/meditation center' for meditation, chanting, and religious rituals, monks study and practice the Rnying ma and Dge lugs traditions.

The fifth Bse incarnation *bla ma*, Bse tshang blo bzang dpal ldan (b. 1938), and the fifth Gser kha incarnation *bla ma*, are the highest Dge lugs section teachers in Rkang tsha Monastery.

The fourth Ka ring sgom sprul incarnation *bla ma*, Bstan 'dzin 'jigs med ye shes rnam rgyal (1940~2017), was the most respected Rnying ma section teacher in Rkang tsha Monastery.

The sixth Lha gzhis reincarnation *bla ma*, Bstan 'dzin lung rtogs rgya mtsho (b. 1979), is the *skar ma'i bla ma*³ 'funeral *bla ma*' of Rkang tsha Village.

According to Nian and Bai (1993:85), some sixty monks were in the monastery from the early twentieth century until it was closed in 1958. The monastery was reopened in 1962, closed again during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and opened once more in 1980, at which time there were only five monks. A khu bstan 'dzin was the *bla ma*, Nor bu rgya mtsho was the *dge bskos* 'discipline enforcer', 'Jigs med bstan pa was the *dbu mdzad* 'first speaker at chanting rituals', and Dge 'dun rgya mtsho was the *chab ril* 'assistant to the *dge bskos*'. Gser kha bstan pa rgya mtsho (1921-2001) was the Buddhism teacher at Bis mdo Monastery⁴ and later was invited to his home monastery (Rkang tsha Monastery) to teach Buddhism in 1980. He became the fifth Gser kha incarnation (Blo bzang 'jam dbyangs thub bstan rgya mtsho (b. 1979) *bla ma's yongs 'dzin* 'reincarnation *bla ma's* teacher'.

In 2019, fifty-three monks studied Buddhism in Rkang tsha Monastery. The fifth reincarnation Gser kha *bla ma*, Blo bzang 'jma dbyangs thub bstan rgya mtsho, managed the monastery with the *tshogs 'dus* 'group of five monks' - a *bla ma*, a *dge skos*, a *dbu mdzad*, and two older monks ('Jigs med rgya mtsho and 'Jigs med sbyin pa). The *tshogs 'dus* assist the fifth Gser kha reincarnation *bla ma* in arranging religious activities and rituals. They are also responsible for building temples and stupas and overseeing monastery rules, such as ensuring all monks attend their classes, participate in chanting rituals, and abide by their vows.⁵

¹ See 'Jigs med rgya mtsho et al. (2019:70, 105).

² See 'Jigs med rgya mtsho et al. (2019:94).

³ A *skar ma'i bla ma* 'funeral *bla ma*' comes to a home to conduct funeral rituals for the deceased before a corpse is taken to the sky burial ground. The *skar ma'i bla ma* lives in a monastery, studies Buddhism, and is expected to be an accomplished Buddhist practitioner. Rkang tsha Village's *skar ma'i bla ma* was the Lha gzhis reincarnation. When the fifth Lha gzhis passed away, the village asked the fourth Gser kha reincarnation *bla ma* to be the *skar ma'i bla ma* until the sixth Lha gzhis was identified. In 2019, the sixth incarnation was Rkang tsha Village's *skar ma'i bla ma* who is also the *khri ba* 'abbot' of Bis mdo Monastery, where he spends most of his time.

⁴ Bis mdo dgon chen bkra shis chos 'khor gling 'Bis mdo Monastery' is located five kilometers southwest of Bis mdo Township Town, Ya rdzi County. The monastery (Sa skya Sect) was founded by Bla ma bka' zhi ba shes rab rgyal mtshan in 1282. In 1733, the monastery followed the Dge lugs Sect. In 2013, ten reincarnation *bla ma* and 300 monks were resident, making it the largest Dge lugs monastery in Ya rdzi County (<https://www.qhtibetan.com>, accessed 2 August 2020).

⁵ A *dge tshul* 'novice-monk aged three to nineteen' is expected to abide by thirty-six vows while a *dge slong* takes 253 vows at the age of twenty. All the vows are based on four main vows - no killing, stealing, lying, and sexual misconduct. If a monk breaks any of these vows, he is considered a layman.

FIG 5. Dga' ldan chos 'phel gling - Rkang tsha Monastery (2018, 'Jigs med dpal ldan).



RKANG TSHA VILLAGE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

ACCOUNT ONE: DKON MCHOG NYI MA (B. 1943)¹

When I was young, Kha so'i nor bu was our *dpon po* 'chief'. His son, Blo bzang, inherited his father's authority, and the other tribe leaders respected and obeyed him as they had his father. Dpon po blo bzang was killed with his two sons in 1958, ending hereditary tribal leadership. Now we have new leaders such as the *hru'u ci*² 'Party secretary', *sde dpon*³ 'village leader', and *dui zhang* 'brigade leader' in our community, which we didn't have when I was a child.

Today, Rkang tsha Village has three authoritative leaders and two groups. They are the fifth Gser kha incarnation *bla ma*, the village leader; Party secretary; *rga po*⁴ 'big men'; and *tshogs 'dus*.

¹ Interviewed 20 October 2019.

² *Hru'u ci* is derived from the Chinese 'shuji'. The equivalent Tibetan term is *drung chen*. He represents the local township government office, is in charge of village activities, and announces government policies to the village.

³ The *sde dpon* is a leadership position created in about 1996. He is responsible for general events, the grassland, and livestock issues.

⁴ Locals maintain traditional local rules based on social customs and religious beliefs. These rules are managed by several elder men who oversee rules in herding communities. These elders are called '*rgan po*' (Chos rgyal nam mkha'i nor bu 1983:121). *Rgan po* and *rga po* have the same meaning. *Rgan po* is Literary Tibetan while *rga po* is the oral form of the same.

The fifth Gser kha reincarnation *bla ma* was born in Chu kha ma (Qishama) Township, Rma chu (Maqu) County, Kan su'u Province. In 1992, he was identified as the incarnation of the fourth Gser kha *bla ma*, 'Jigs med bskal bzang rgya mtsho (1901-1957), by two high *bla ma*, Bse tshang bla bzang dpal ldan and G.yer gshong rin po che. Afterward, Rkang tsha Village, including the leaders, respected him as a holy person.

Villagers select the village leader, who is in charge of general events, the grassland, and village livestock issues. The local government chooses the Party secretary, who investigates and is in charge of village activities and announces government policies to the village. In 2010, for instance, the local government chose Mgur lo (b. 1971) as Party secretary, while villagers chose Lhun 'grub (b. 1974) to be the village leader through an election.

The *rga po* consists of thirteen men, including the village leader, Party secretary, and *khe ci* (*kuaiji*) 'accountant'. Each of the five brigades selects two men to represent their brigade. The *rga po* is the most effective leadership group in Rkang tsha Village, observing, discussing, and addressing community problems. For example, in 2012-2014, the number of livestock increased, resulting in a lack of forage for livestock. Herders demanded that the *rga po* solve this problem. Consequently, in 2012, the *rga po* observed the entire community's grassland and livestock situation and discussed options for two years. They first suggested controlling the number of livestock and dividing grassland among individuals. Discussions led to a decision to limit the number of livestock. The *rga po* then established the *tshod 'dzin rga po* 'big-men controlling livestock number' consisting of thirty villagers with six men from each of the five brigades with the organization taking orders from the *rga po*.

Several steps were taken to limit livestock numbers. First, each community member was allowed to have fifty sheep, including lambs; or thirteen yaks, not including calves; or nine horses, not including foals.¹ More than this number per community member was not allowed. Second, if a herder had extra livestock, the *tshod 'dzin rga po* fined them 5,000 RMB. The entire community was informed of these conditions at the outset and given three months to conform with these rules.

On the first day of the tenth month in 2014, all *tshod 'dzin rga po* members and *rga po* went to every family to count the livestock and asked the family head to swear that their family did not have more than the number allowed. For example, this group came to my home and counted our livestock, yaks, and sheep. My family had eight people at that time, so we were allowed 400 sheep or 104 yaks. Since my family had 193 sheep and fifty-seven yaks, we had violated the rules and were fined 5,000 RMB.

Each year, the *tshod 'dzin rga po* visit each family, check the number of livestock, and request that the pastoralists swear that they do not have extra livestock. For example, in 2019, my brother, Bsod nams tshe ring (b. 1993), swore, "'Di'i (*nor dang lug*) han chud ki cig yod na sgar ga 'I swear to the monastery, we don't have extra livestock'.

Rkang tsha Village Party secretary, Mgur lo,² recounted:

¹ Sheep are used as a measurement unit. For instance, one yak counts as four sheep, and one horse counts as six sheep. If a member wants to have sheep, they may have only fifty. If a member wants to herd yaks, they may have thirteen. If a member wants horses, they may have nine.

² Mgur lo (b. 1971) was the Party secretary of Rkang tsha Village from 2010 to 2012, and was a *rga po* member from 2013 to 2016.

ACCOUNT TWO: MGUR LO

Since 2012, we started discussing grassland and livestock issues. I was Party secretary at that time. The village leader, Rga po, and I had many meetings about the problems of grassland and livestock. Eventually, we gathered with all of the community members in Na bzhug during the Gdugs dkar tshe bcu ritual¹ and reported grassland and livestock issues. We pointed out that the number of livestock in our community was increasing, and there was inadequate grass for the livestock, which impacted livestock quality and dairy production. There was also conflict with neighboring pastoral communities such as Rgan gya, The bo, Zho phong, Glang rgya, Zog pa, and Bse chang over grassland and livestock grazing.

During our meetings, the usual options were discussed. Some villagers suggested dividing grassland among individuals. Others suggested that we should control the number of livestock. Many disagreed with the grassland division because some areas don't have much grass, some don't have water, and living at the borders of our area often involves quarrels with neighbors. For example, we are at the border of Kan su'u and Mtsho sngon provinces and at the boundary of Rma lho Prefecture and Mtsho shar City. Conflict with bordering communities is common. For instance, conflict with Rgan gya in 2004 led to conflict and several deaths. No family would agree to have grassland in poor land nor at the borders. Most community members thus agreed to control the number of livestock. We then organized *tshod 'dzin rga po* and worked on how to do this. Village leaders also participated and worked with the *tshod 'dzin rga po* organization and, in the 2014, we fully accomplished limiting the number of livestock in our village.

CB

CB 'manager of seasonal events' is a historical organization in Rkang tsha Village that stopped functioning for about two decades after 1958. In 1981, CB received government permission to reconstitute itself, reorganized, and officially was called Rtswa sa do dam u yon lhan khang (Caoyuan xingzheng weiyuan hui). Locally, however, it was referred to as CB. As a local, I refer to it as CB in this paper.

¹ Gdugs dkar tshe bcu is an annual religious ritual for laymen with each family sending a participant, except for families without adult males.

Fig 6. Rkang tsha Village CB members with Bse tshang blo bzang dpal ldan at Rkang tsha Monastery (1991, Klu 'bum rgyal).



ESTABLISHING CB

After the restoration of Rkang tsha Monastery in 1980, local monks and village elders reorganized CB according to the traditional system. They selected fifteen men who had participated in CB before 1958 and for years, these community elders worked with younger locals.

Later, CB membership selection changed. Members are now selected from the five brigades, with three members chosen from each brigade. According to community rules, each household must be part of CB on a rotating basis. The exceptions are *a ye'i khyim tshang* 'families without adult males', and a family with only a sixty-year-old (or older) adult male. These families are not fined for non-participation.

The fifteen CB members are thus from fifteen households representing the five brigades. There is no precedent for female participation in CB.

In 2019, Rkang tsha Village had seventeen CB organizations that rotate to work on an annual basis. The sixteenth day of the fourth lunisolar month is an auspicious day to establish CB with new membership.

Every year, during Bzhi ba'i smyung gnas 'fasting period during the fourth month'¹ - the monastery leaders establish CB leadership for the coming year utilizing traditional practices. I

¹ In Rkang tsha Village, Bzhi ba'i smyung gnas is observed for three days from the fourteenth to the sixteenth days of fourth month at Rkang tsha Monastery. On the first day, breakfast is only tea. *Gung tshigs* 'lunch' is food without meat, salt, spices, garlic, onions, green onions, pepper, or radish. In the evening there is *rung ja* 'tea only' (no food). On the second day, there is no eating no drinking of any beverages, and no talking until

interviewed 'Jigs med dpal ldan (b. 1967), who has been the leader of Rkang tsha Monastery since the year 2000:

ACCOUNT THREE: 'JIGS MED DPAL LDAN¹

The sixteenth day of the fourth month marks the end of Bzhi ba'i smyung gnas 'fast in the fourth month'. All community members gather in our monastery to celebrate the end of the fast.

Early that day, the *tshogs 'dus* gathered in the *mgon khang* 'protector deities' temple' to discuss establishing a new CB for the year and a leader. Our village has seventeen CB organizations, and we listed them from number one to seventeen. Each CB organization takes its turn to work with our village. This year it is CB Organization Two's turn. We examined CB Two members, chose five capable veteran members, listed their names, and gave the list to A lags. He divined and chose three names. We wrote each of the three names on three pieces of paper, folded them, put them into three small *rtsam pa* pills, and placed them in a wooden bowl. We chanted scriptures and prayed to Buddha and the deities. Next, A lags gently shook the wooden bowl several times, chose a *rtsam pa* pill, gave it to *dge bskos*, and said that this was the CB leader for 2019. Thus, Tshe brtan rgyal was selected. He is in his forties.

The *smyung gnas* celebration is held in our monastery. A lags, monks, and male and female practitioners were in the 'du khang 'congregation chanting hall' while other villagers were in the *chos ra* 'chanting courtyard'. In 2019, the Ar lcags Tribe² was the *smyung gnas* sponsor and manager. Ar lcags tribal men and women busily served *mar nyog* 'wheat flour cooked with butter', 'bras sil 'rice and wild yams with melted butter and sugar', milk tea, fried bread, a small ball of butter, and yogurt to all attendees.

After we determined CB membership and its leader in the *mgon khang*, the *dge bskos* went to the chanting courtyard with the *chab ril*, where a celebration was being held. The *dge bskos* held a list of the CB members and stood on the courtyard's highest platform. The *chab ril* held red *phyag mdud* 'long cloth pieces with a knot in the center' and stood by the *dge bskos*, who announced which CB organization would take responsibility for the community this year. He called CB members' names one by one and asked them to come and accept their duties. He then handed each of them a *phyag mdud* that they wore around their neck, representing authority and protection from the deities in their obligatory work. In conclusion, the *dge bskos* designated Tshe brtan rgyal as the CB leader and gave him a red *phyag mdud* and a yellow *dgu mdud* 'kha btags with nine knots' taken from the *mgon khang*.

After the monastery established the CB organization that day, there was another day determined by local custom for CB to begin work.

THE TIGER DAY³

Lnga ba stag gi tshes mgo, 'the first day of the fifth month is the Tiger Day' is commonly heard in Rkang tsha Village. This is considered a powerful, auspicious day and is respected by others. On that day, all CB members gathered in the monastery, offered incense to the deities, and asked A lags and the *dge bskos* for advice. *Dge bskos* took them into the *mgon khang* and prayed to the protector deities for the CB members' safety, health, and success in their duties. Afterward, they discussed principles and rules for CB members, known as *nang chig*. For instance, what attitude and regulations should

sunrise of the next day. Practitioners are local monks and Rkang tsha Community members (male and female). On the third day, a celebration at the monastery marks the end of the fast.

¹ 'Jigs med dpal ldan is a leader and *bla ma* in Rkang tsha Monastery. Recorded on 28 November 2019.

² In turn, the four tribes sponsor and manage the *smyung gnas* on an annual basis.

³ The tiger is a zodiac sign symbolic of strength and power, and generally inspires fear and respect. Every year, month, and day has a zodiac sign.

they have to help their work be more united, e.g., what punishment should be given if a CB member did not participate in activities or was not on time? Regarding this, I had a conversation with Lcags thar 'bum, a five-time CB participant, who provided the following account:

ACCOUNT FOUR: LCAGS THAR 'BUM¹

I was a CB member in 1983. It was the first time I joined the CB. Our members gathered in the monastery on the first day of the fifth month, met the *dge bskos*, and visited the protector deities' temple. Next, we had a meeting for *nang chig*. Our leader, 'Jigs med brtson 'grus, held the meeting. We determined three principles to guide our work. We swore to be loyal to our community, do everything fairly, and cooperate and undertake activities together. We also devised two rules. First, if a member did not participate in meetings and activities such as patrolling seasonal pastures, the punishment was fifteen RMB² per day. Second, not patrolling the borders would incur a fifty RMB fine.³ Patrolling borders between our community and herding communities such as Rgan gya, The bo, Zho phong, Gling rgyal, and Bse chang was dangerous. As a result, there was regular conflict and, in the worst situations, fighting and killing.

They chose me to be the bookkeeper on that day because I was the only member who could write. My special duties were to record our crucial decisions and announcements, list our income and expenditures, and note our agreement principles and rules in a notebook.

Next, we decided to meet again on the fifteenth day of the fifth month to discuss the division of seasonal pastures and seasonal migration. The meeting ended, and we rode our horses back to our homes.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE FIFTH MONTH

The fifteenth day of the fifth month's meeting is known as *ru rgyas* 'seasonal migration conference'. Rkang tsha pastoralists are very concerned about this meeting because CB announces when herders will move to the summer pasture from the spring pasture, camp locations in the summer pasture, and what rules apply. Lcags thar 'bum shared his experiences:

ACCOUNT FIVE: LCAGS THAR 'BUM

On the fifteenth day of the fifth month, we all gathered in the tent of our leader, 'Jigs med brtson 'grus, in Ban sked klad in the spring pasture. When I arrived, some members were already there. Others were absent, so we waited until everyone arrived. The family offered us milk, tea, bread, and *rtsam pa* for breakfast. Then, we began our meeting with the division of the summer pasture into five sections - Dbyar lhas, 'Brug mo kha, Phyi ro, Bkra shis lung dkar, and Mkhar lung klad. Secondly, we numbered each of the summer pastures from one to five, wrote each number on a piece of paper, and folded each paper. Our leader held the papers and asked a representative from each brigade to choose one for their brigade. On behalf of Brigade Four, I chose number four - 'Brug mo kha. Consequently, our summer pasture was 'Brug mo kha for that year. Brigade One chose Phyi ro, Brigade Two chose Bkra shis lung dkar, Brigade Three chose Dbyar lhas, and Brigade Five chose Mkhar lung klad.

The family then prepared lunch, and we discussed the time to move from the spring pasture to the summer pasture. We inquired about the grass in the spring pasture. It was nearly finished, and many herders found it hard to graze livestock, so we all agreed to move to the summer pastures as soon as possible. We decided that the community would move to the summer pasture on the eighteenth day of the

¹ Lcags thar 'bum (b. 1954) is a pastoralist in Rkang tsha Village (recorded 27 April 2019).

² This was in the 1980s. In 2019, it was one hundred RMB per day.

³ In 2019, it was 200 RMB per day.

fifth month, with each family required to move within three days. If they didn't move on time, we would fine them. Next, we made rules for seasonal migration and grazing.

RULES

CB establishes rules for seasonal events and may fine rule breakers. There are several types of rules - *ru chig* 'migration rules', *rtswa chig* 'grazing rules', and *phyi chig* 'rules for outsiders/neighbors herding communities'. Lcags thar 'bum shares his experiences of making rules and fines and compares the 1980s with 2019:

ACCOUNT SIX: LCAGS THAR 'BUM

We made rules based on the previous CB organization's practices. There were two types of *ru chig*. First, the entire community had to move to the summer pasture with their livestock within three days of the migration date. If pastoralists did not move on time, the first late day's fine was five RMB, the second late day's penalty was ten RMB, and the third late day's fine was twenty RMB. The fine was a *sha bzan* 'six-year-old male sheep' worth around seventy RMB from the fourth late day in the 1980s. By 2019 these fines had increased some tenfold: the first late day's fine was fifty RMB, the second late day's fine was one hundred RMB, and the third late day's penalty was 200 RMB. From the fourth late day, the fine was a *sha bzan* that was now worth about 1,800 RMB.

Each household must stay in their own brigade's summer pasture. They are not allowed to camp elsewhere. If a family does not move into their assigned brigade pasture, they are fined one *sha bzan*. For instance, my brother is a Brigade Two member. He did not camp in their summer pasture, Mkhar lung klad. Instead, he camped in Brigade Three's summer pasture, Dbyar lhas, so we took a *sha bzan* from him.

In terms of grazing rules, each seasonal pasture has a border. We protect the seasonal pastures at the borders. Our herders must graze their livestock in the summer pastures during summertime. In spring, livestock must graze in the spring pasture, and in autumn, livestock must be grazed in the autumn pasture. Community members who graze their livestock in violation of these rules are fined. For instance, when we caught herders grazing livestock in other seasonal pastures when the community was camping in the summer pasture, we fined the herders 0.5 RMB per sheep, one RMB for a yak, and three RMB per horse. If the sheep number was more than fifty, the fine was fifty RMB. Today, the penalty is two RMB per sheep (or 200 RMB for more than fifty sheep), four RMB per adult yak, two RMB for a yak calf, and eight RMB for a horse.

Third, rules for outsiders apply to neighbor communities. If neighbors graze livestock on our grassland, we fine them a sheep for a *lug khyu* 'flock of sheep' (generally numbering 150-200), and collect cash-fines for yaks and horses. We negotiate fines with neighboring communities. For example, if Rgan gya Community¹ herded their livestock in our grassland, we take a sheep from a *lug khyu*, and collect one RMB per yak, one RMB for a calf, and one RMB for a horse. Except for Rgan gya and The bo, other neighboring communities such as Glign rgyal and Zog pa are fined differently, e.g., four RMB per sheep, six RMB per yak, and twelve RMB per horse. They fine us the same if we graze livestock on their grassland.

¹ In 1983, PaN chen rin po che visited his home and directed the local government and local elders to solve the grassland dispute between Rkang tsha and Rgan gya communities (FIG 9). PaN chen rin po che set fines for both sides if they crossed their borders. The tenth PaN chen rin po che's full name was Blo bzang lhun grub chos kyi rgyal mtshan. He was born on the third day of first month in 1938. His father, Gur mgon tshe brtan, and mother, Bsod nams sgrol ma, were farmers in Ma ru Village, Bis mdo Town. After he was identified, he moved to Gtsang bkra shis lhun po Monastery, which is the PaN chen's monastery in Gzhis kha rtse (Rikaze) City, where he studied Buddhism and Tibetan (PaN chen sku phreng bcu ba blo bzang lhun grub chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 2011:1-2).

FIG 7. A family moves to summer pasture from spring pasture (2014, 'Jigs med dpal ldan).



FIG 8. Yaks moving to summer pasture (2014, 'Jigs med dpal ldan).



FIG 9. Celebrating after PaN chen rin po che solved a grassland dispute between Rkang tsha and Rgan gya communities with local people and local government. PaN chen rin po ordered thirteen stone piles erected at the border of Rkang tsha and Rgan gya communities and set fines for both communities if they crossed the border. In 1983, the celebration was held in PaN chen rin po che's home, Bis mdo dpon tshang, in Mar ru Village, Bis mdo Township. (My Buddhism teacher, 'Jigs med rgya mtsho, allowed me to copy this picture in 2019).



FINES

In terms of fine collection, I compare the experiences of the 1980s to today. In the 1980s, CB commonly collected fines in the form of goods such as butter (one kilo was worth twenty RMB while in 2019 it was ninety RMB per kilo¹), dried cheese (one kilo was six RMB, but was forty RMB in 2019) and sheep wool (one kilo was four RMB, but in 2019, it was forty RMB). Breaking CB rules is common and is not considered odd nor bad. Dkon mchog nyi ma (b. 1943) described his experiences of paying fines to CB in the 1980s:

ACCOUNT SEVEN: DKON MCHOG NYI MA

My family has broken CB rules many times. For example, one summer, I was grazing my sheep in the autumn pasture. CB members came and said, "*Khyod chig la thogs yis bsdad yod gi*" 'You broke our grazing

¹ Prices for butter, cheese, and sheep wool are provided on the basis of conversations with Dgon mchog nyi ma (b. 1943), Bkra shis don 'grub (b. 1968), and Lcags thar 'bum (b. 1954) in October 2019.

rules'," and they drove my sheep into the summer pasture. The next day, they came to my home and asked me to pay fifty RMB. We didn't use much cash at that time, so we gave them a *lag ga* 'two-year-old sheep', instead of cash.

Sometimes, some people refused to pay the fines and argued with CB, who then asked village leaders to help. If the situation worsened, monastery leaders were asked to assist. Village or monastery leaders were generally able to convince people to obey the CB. Such arguments have a punishment called '*khon chig* 'fine for argument'. The fine is a sheep.

At another time, we were living in an autumn pasture when all of my family's yaks returned to the summer pasture by themselves. The CB kept them at the summer and autumn pastures border and asked me to pay thirty RMB as a fine. Later, we gave them ten bowls of dried cheese instead of the cash.

Today, community members, especially young people, send funds via WeChat to pay CB fines. No one gives CB butter and cheese, but sheep are still given. Fines help pay for the organization's expenditures, e.g., food and gasoline (in the past, horses were used, but today all CB members use motorcycles and cars), and religious activity expenses, e.g., Gdugs dkar zlog chen,¹ Dbyar ston,² and '*tshams zhu*³ for high *bla ma*.

FIG 10. The CB camp at the border of the summer and autumn pastures (13 July 2018, Blo bzang).



¹ Explained later.

² Explained later.

³ '*Tshams zhu* refers to Lo sar gifts for *bla ma*.

FIG 11. At the CB camp, several yaks trespassed in the autumn pasture. CB members wait for their owners to pay the fines (14 July 2018, Blo bzang).



FIG 12. CB members gather in an autumn pasture and check if neighboring communities' livestock are in their pastures (6 August 2017, Bsod nams tshe ring).



RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES AND CB OBLIGATIONS

CB takes responsibility for religious activities - Zlog chen, and Dbyar ston¹ - and preparing '*tshams zhu* for *bla ma*.

ZLOG CHEN

Zlog chen is a short form for Gdugs dkar zlog chen, a ten-day annual religious ritual held in Rkang tsha Village. Gdugs dkar 'white umbrella' is a female bodhisattva and has this name because she holds a white umbrella. *Zlog* 'defeating evils' and *chen* 'big' combined suggest 'big ritual of Gdugs dkar defeating evils'. *Zlog chen* is commonly held in fabric tents in mid-summer in the summer pasture or early autumn in the autumn pasture. The time and location are determined by CB and monastery leaders. CB's obligations are preparing for the ritual and serving monks during the ritual.

CB members pitch a big white fabric tent (*tshogs ras* 'assembly/meeting tent') for the monks. Seven monks chant scriptures. Three monks assist and make *gtor ma*.² The monks chant, eat, and sleep in the tent. Tents are also pitched for a kitchen, a storage space, and for the CB members to eat and sleep in.

In the *tshogs ras*, CB members make beds for the monks and prepare tables and other items for the rituals. They also prepare the meals from mutton, beef, *rtsam pa*, dried cheese, butter, bread, yogurt, milk, wild yams, and wheat flour. Today, they prepare a more extensive range of food, including potatoes, green peppers, radishes, bananas, apples, oranges, and grapes. The CB members borrow two or three big pots, several teapots, spoons, bowls, and metal stoves from local families. They prepare three meals per day for ten days, offer food to participants, and offer incense to the deities.

Every afternoon during the ritual, hundreds of locals (primarily elders, women, and children) come to the ritual site and sit in front of the monks' tent, waiting to obtain holy water³ from the monks, which they use to wet their heads, faces, hands, and upper bodies.

In the 1980s, there were no private shops. However, since the early twenty-first century, there have been several private shops in Rkang tsha Village. In addition, there are tent shops near the ritual site where locals buy clothes, fruits, drinks, candies, peanuts, melon seeds, and biscuits. Rkang tsha pastoralists historically used little cash. Instead, they exchanged dried cheese, sheepskins, and yak skins for commodities. This situation changed to cash transactions in the early twenty-first century.

After seven days, the Gtor rgyag 'discard the *gtor ma*' rite is held that signifies defeating/expelling evil from the area. On that day, community members (mostly men) come to participate. When monks finish chanting scriptures in the tent, CB members carry the *gtor ma* some distance away. All participants follow the CB members in a line.

Three CB members carry three copper bowls at the head of the line containing holy water, yogurt, and liquor, which they fling into the sky. Other CB members following behind carry the *gtor ma*. Next come the monks, chanting, beating drums, clanging cymbals, and blowing conch shells. In the past, other men holding guns, rifles, pistols, and slingshots followed the monks. As they approached their destination, they fired the guns into the sky amid much yelling. However, since around 2006, locals stopped using guns. Instead, they set off fireworks.

¹ Explained later.

² *Gtor ma* are made from *rtsam pa* and butter, and sometimes are colored red and black, which symbolize evil.

³ Monks add a little milk to a container of water, place the container in a high place where they are chanting, and chant water deity scriptures inviting water deities to enter the water in the container. The water is then considered holy and is thought capable of refreshing supplicants, and curing illness and defeating evils in the bodies of supplicants, who typically sip a little of the holy water.

At the destination, monks threw all of the *gtor ma* into a small wooden hut and set it on fire. When the Zlog chen *bla ma* 'ritual's officiator' threw three balls of red-colored *rtsam pa* on the ground one by one, the guns were fired, and those with slingshots slung stones at the *rtsam pa* balls and wildly yelled. After burning the *gtor ma*, they would all return to the tent, wash their hands, burn juniper, and fumigate themselves to ensure evils did not infect them. After the *gtor rgyag* rite, community members returned home while monks and CB members remained at the tents to hold the *sbyin bsreg* ritual.

FIG 13. Zlog chen *gtor ma* (2018, 'Jigs med dpal ldan).



Sbyin bsreg (*sbyin* 'almsgiving', *bsreg* 'burning') offers food to odor eaters, hungry ghosts, and demi-gods via burning offerings during a three-day ritual. CB members continue serving the monks. For three days, monks chant scriptures and eat and sleep in the same tent. At the end of *sbyin bsreg*, monks make a flat, square soil platform near the tent. They color it white with wheat flour and use red soil to decorate it with religious symbols such as vajras and Dharma-wheels.

On one side of the soil platform, twelve ingredients are placed for ritual burning: rice, barley, peas, wheat, melted butter, *ku sha* 'poa cynosuroides', *yam shing* 'wood', *til* 'black sesamum', *ram pa* 'quitch grass', *zho zan* 'roasted barley flour mixed with yogurt', *yungs dkar* 'white mustard seed', and *so ba* 'coarse, thick-shelled barley'. On the other side, monks sit cross-legged, chanting scriptures.

Near the soil platform, the ritual's officiator sits on a high throne. The offerings are burned with dried yak dung and wood on the soil platform. The *sbyin bsreg bla ma* tosses offerings into the fire before him. Again, community members gather and sit until *tshogs bsags mar khu* 'melted butter' is poured on the fire. The ritual ends after 'o *thug* 'rice cooked with milk' is served and eaten. Community members then return home.

The day after the *sbyin bsreg* ritual, the monks return to the monastery. CB members fold the tents, return borrowed items, and calculate the ritual's expenditures. In the 1980s, total expenses were around 3,000 RMB¹ plus four or five sheep. In 2019, the expenditure was around 25,000 RMB² and three sheep.

DBYAR STON

Dbyar ston 'summer feast', is held annually on the first day of the eighth month. It marks the end of the monks' six weeks of summer residence religious in Rkang tsha Monastery.³ CB sponsors the feast. The day before *dbyar ston*, all monks prepare for the feast. They carry the *tshogs ras* to Mgar rgan (an autumn pasture, where the Rkang tsha Monastery annually held the feast, about half a kilometer from the monastery), pitch it, and make adobe stoves by the tent. Then, the young monks go to the valley to fetch water from a stream. CB members prepare the food that includes mutton, sausages, bread, noodles, rice, wild yams, green peppers, potatoes, radishes, milk, yogurt, dried cheese, butter, and fruit (apples, pears, watermelons, grapes, raisins), candy, peanuts, and sunflower seeds. The *go gnyer* 'monastery cook' and young monks cook for the feast.

On the feast day, monks line up and walk to the tent from the monastery. When they approach the tent, the CB leader offers a *kha btags* to the *gnas bstan pa* 'Dbyar gnas officiator', welcoming the monks to the feast. When the monks finish chanting and praying in the tent, the young monks and CB members offer monks *rgya thug* (pieces of beef and pork, radishes, green onions, and vermicelli in meat soup), steamed and baked bread, and milk tea for breakfast. 'Bras sil, bread, milk tea, snacks, candy, and fruit are served for lunch. Mutton, blood sausages, *rtsam pa* sausages, wheat flour sausages, bean flour sausages, and noodles in meat soup are served for *gung tshigs*.

After eating, the monks gather around the tent, wrestle, skip rope, hold jumping and running competitions, and *brtag re* (several, or at least two people, verbally tease each other), while CB members sing Tibetan folksongs. They enjoy themselves until late in the afternoon. Later, some monks fold the tent, tie it and its poles, and carry it back to the monastery. Other monks return the carpets, big pots, and other cooking utensils to the monastery, and clean where they cooked and

¹ Information provided by Lcags thar 'bum (b. 1943) based on his experiences.

² Information provided by Bkra shis don 'grub (b. 1968).

³ Dbyar gnas is a Dge lugs ritual, particularly practiced in Dge lugs monasteries. It was initiated by Rje tsong kha ba (1357-1419) in 1402 at Gnam rtsed lding (Bkra shis tshe ring 2008:333-347). Originally, *dbyar gnas* lasted all summer (the sixth, seventh, and eighth lunar months). Later, it was held from the fifteenth day of the sixth month to the first day of the eighth month. During *dbyar gnas*, monks stay in the monastery, study, and meditate. They are not allowed to go far from the monastery, nor have picnics and other activities on the grassland, wash their cassocks and other items in the streams, nor swim in streams. Such activity might kill countless creatures and harm plants (Tshe tan zhabs drung rje btsun 'jigs med rig pa'i blo gros, 2007:24-45). At three PM, monks eat *gung tshigs* 'monks' afternoon meal'. Afterward, they are only allowed to drink milk tea and have yogurt and fruit. Other foods are not allowed until the next morning (six years of personal experiences).

pitched the tent. The remaining food is divided among individuals, including CB members. Finally, the monks return to the monastery, and CB members return to their homes.

In the 1980s, expenditure for the feast was a sheep and around 300 RMB. In 2019, it was 2,000 RMB and a sheep.

FIG 14. Rkang tsha Monastery monks coming for Dbyar ston (1990s, Dge 'dun rgya mtsho).



FIG 15. Rkang tsha Monastery monks chant in a *tshogs ras* at Dbyar ston (1990s, 'Jigs med thabs mkhas).



'TSHAMS ZHU

CB's third annual obligation is to prepare *'tshams zhu* for high *bla ma* and leaders. Every year during Lo sar, Rkang tsha Community offers *'tshams zhu* to high *bla ma* such as the tenth PaN chen rin po che, Bse tshang blo bzang dpal ldan (b. 1938),¹ A lags Rta mgrin (~b. 1942-2017),² A lags gser kha (b. 1979), and A lags lha gzhis (b. 1979). Therefore, before Lo sar, CB prepares *lug sha sha khog* 'sheep carcass minus the head, internal organs, and hooves' for the high *bla ma*, and presents them to the village leader and Party secretary. The leaders add *kha btags*, silk, tea bricks, and yogurt, which are offered to *bla ma*. For instance, in 1982, Rkang tsha Village leader, Zon thar rgyal (b. 1949), and the local monastery leader, Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (1923-2016), traveled to Beijing to offer *'tshams zhu* to the PaN chen rin po che. Zon thar rgyal describes his experience:

ACCOUNT EIGHT: ZON THAR RGYAL

Several days after the first day of Lo sar, our village and monastery ordered A khu rgya mtsho (Dge 'dun rgya mtsho) and me to take *'tshams zhu* to Rin po che in Beijing. We took a *lug sha sha khog* (prepared by CB), butter (~twenty-five kilos), dried yogurt (~fifteen kilos), *kha btags*, and long silk as *'tshams zhu*. Before we set off, we reported to Dpon tshang,³ who phoned Beijing to notify of our visit. We went with other leaders from Bis mdo Township. Then, we took a train to Beijing from Zi ling (Xining). When we reached a train station in Beijing, Mchod rten (~1935~2000s) met us and took us to the Xizang banshi chu 'Tibet Office' where we stayed in a hotel. The next morning, we met and offered *'tshams zhu* to PaN chen rin po che. He said that we would have dinner together in his apartment that evening, and then he left for a meeting.

Rin po che offered a bowl of yogurt to the monks and a cup of liquor to the laymen at dinner. We chatted with Rin po che about our community's situation and asked him what *rim gro* 'religious rituals' we should perform. Later, he told his cousin, Mchod rten, to take us to Buddhist temples and monasteries in Beijing.

Over the next few days, Mchod rten escorted us to Dga' ldan byin chags gling (Yonghegong),⁴ and Lha khang ser bo 'The West Yellow Temple' (Beijing Huangsi),⁵ and other Buddhist sites. After several days, we returned home. I represented our village seven times in taking *'tshams zhu* to Rin po che in Beijing before he passed away in 1989.

¹ Bse tshang blo bzang dpal ldan is a scholar and respected reincarnation *bla ma*. Born in The bo Village, Reb gong County, he was identified as the sixth reincarnation of the Bse *bla ma* after the death of the fifth incarnation, Blo bzang bkra shis 'phrin las rgya mtsho (1890-1937). Bse tshang blo bzang dpal ldan has lived in his former incarnation's monasteries, Gter lung and Gtsos (Hezuo), in Gtsos City, Kan lho. After the Cultural Revolution he taught in the Tibetan Buddhism College in Beijing, and Gtsos Nationality Normal University in Kan su'u. He has published six books related to Buddhist teaching, Buddhist philosophy, poetry, and Tibetan history (Klu tshang rdo rje rin chen 2001:1-7).

² A lags rta mgrin was the fourth incarnation of Ka ring sgom sprul and a mantra practitioner and teacher of the Rnying ma Sect in Rkang tsha and Ka ring monasteries. His full name was Bstan 'dzin 'jigs med ye shed rnam rgyal.

³ Dpon tshang refers to PaN chen rin po che's family in Mar ru Village.

⁴ "The Yonghegong "Palace of Harmony" is the largest Tibetan-style monastery in Beijing. Built as a palace for the Yongzheng emperor, the complex was rededicated in 1744 by his son the Qianlong emperor as a monastery for Mongolian, Tibetan, and Chinese practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism" (<https://bit.ly/33jTYCN>, accessed 4 August 2020).

⁵ "The Shunzhi emperor (1644-1661) established the precedent of constructing elaborate residences for visiting Tibetan prelates. In 1652, he ordered the construction of Huangsi temple ... in Beijing for the visit of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-82)" (<https://bit.ly/3fr8hri>, accessed 4 August 2020).

FIG 16. A group representing Rkang tsha and Bis mdo communities visited PaN chen rin po che in Beijing, and offered him 'tshams zhu. Mchod rten escorted this group to Buddhist sites such as Dga' ldan byin chags gling (Yonghegong), Pe cin mchod rten dkar po (Baita si, Miaoying si 'White Stupa' Temple), and Ston pa'i tshems gdung mchod rten (Foya sheli ta, where a tooth relic of the Buddha is kept) in Lingguang Temple. This photograph was taken by Mchod rten at Huangsi Temple Beijing in 1982.



FIG 17 (numbered below). Dge' dun rgya mtsho (1923-2016, #2) was a Rkang tsha Monastery leader, 'Dan ma tshul khriims (#3) was a Bis mdo Monastery leader, Sha bo don 'grub (PaN chen's cousin, #4) was a Gshong yul Villager, Zon thar rgyal (#10) was a Rkang tsha Village leader, and Sangs rgyas skyabs (#11) was a Zog pa Village leader. The unidentified others were from Bis mdo Community.



CONCLUSION

Rkang tsha Village limits the number of livestock and moves seasonally to maintain pasture quality. Village leaders establish organizations such as the *tshod 'dzin rga po* and CB to manage the village. The *tshod 'dzin rga po* limits each community member to fifty sheep, thirteen yaks, or nine horses. To enforce this, they visit each family once a year to monitor livestock numbers. If the livestock exceeds what is allowed, the family is fined 5,000 RMB.

Since the local monastery re-established the CB organization in 1983, the organization has worked with the community, managing seasonal migration, protecting seasonal pastures, and sponsoring local religious rituals.

They also establish principles and rules for themselves. For example, when the community moved to the summer pasture from the spring pasture, they set migration rules, grazing rules, and *phyi chig*. Herders breaking these rules are fined cash, sheep, and dried cheese. They also take responsibility for the ten-day Zlog chen religious ritual, including camping on the grassland with several tents and serving the monks conducting the ritual.

CB prepares *lug sha sha khog* and other food for Dbyar ston, a summer feast marking the end of *dbyar gans*. They also prepare *lug sha sha khog* for each high reincarnation *bla ma* during the Lo sar period. Community leaders offer *'tshams zhu* and ask the reincarnation *bla ma* to specify the community's ritual that year. Overall, CB plays a crucial management role for Rkang tsha Herding Community.

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TIBETAN TERMS

'bras sil འབྲས་སིལ།
 'brug mo kha འབྲུག་མོ་ཁ།
 'dan ma tshul khrims འདན་མ་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས།
 'dam ma tshul khrims
 'di'i (nor dang lug) han chud ki cig yod na sgar
 ga འདི་འི་རྟོན་དང་ལུག་ཏུ་ཚུད་ཀྱི་ཅིག་ཡོད་ན་སྐར་ག
 'jam dbyangs thub bstan rgya mtsho འཇམ་དབྱངས་ཐུབ་བསྐྱེད་སྤངས་
 ཐུབ་བསྐྱེད་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 'jigs med brtson 'grus འཇིགས་མེད་བརྩོན་འགྲུས།
 'jigs med bskal bzang rgya mtsho འཇིགས་མེད་བསྐྱེད་སྤངས་
 བཟང་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 'jigs med bstan pa འཇིགས་མེད་བསྐྱེད་པ།
 'jigs med dpal ldan འཇིགས་མེད་དཔལ་ལྷན།
 'jigs med rgya mtsho འཇིགས་མེད་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 'jigs med sbyin pa འཇིགས་མེད་སྤྱིན་པ།
 'jigs med thabs mkhas འཇིགས་མེད་ཐབས་མཁས།
 'khon chig འཁོན་ཆིག་
 'tshams zhu འཚམས་ལྷུ།
 a khu bstan 'dzin ཨ་ཁུ་བསྐྱེད་འཛིན།
 a khu rgya mtsho ཨ་ཁུ་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 a lags ཨ་ལགས།
 a lags gser kha ཨ་ལགས་གསེར་ཁ།
 a lags lha gzhis ཨ་ལགས་ལྷ་བཞིས།
 a lags rta mgrin ཨ་ལགས་རྟ་མགྲིན།
 a mdo ཨ་མདོ།

a ye'i khyim tshang ཨ་ཡེ་འི་ཁྱིམ་ཚང།
 ar lcags ཨར་ལུགས།
 ban sked klad བན་སྒྲིད་ལྗང།
 bis mdo བིས་མདོ།
 bis mdo dgon chen bkra shis chos 'khor gling
 བིས་མདོ་དགོན་ཆེན་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཆོས་འཁོར་གླིང།
 bka' zhi ba shes rab rgyal mtshan བཀའ་ཞི་བཤེས་རབས་
 རྒྱལ་མཚན།
 bkra shis don 'grub བཀྲ་ཤིས་དོན་འགྲུབ།
 bkra shis lung dkar བཀྲ་ཤིས་ལུང་དཀར།
 bkra shis tshe ring བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཚེ་རིང།
 bla ma བླ་མ།
 bla ma lha gzhis བླ་མ་ལྷ་གཞིས།
 blo bzang བློ་བཟང།
 blo bzang 'jam dbyangs thub bstan rgya mtsho
 བློ་བཟང་འཇམ་དབྱངས་ཐུབ་བསྐྱེད་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 blo bzang bkra shis 'phrin las rgya mtsho
 བློ་བཟང་བཀྲ་ཤིས་འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱལ་མཚོ།
 blo bzang lhun grub chos kyi rgyal mtshan
 བློ་བཟང་ལུན་གྲུབ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་མཚན།
 bod spyi bshad བོད་སྤྱི་བཤད།
 brtag re བརྟག་རེ།
 bsang chu བསང་ཆུ།
 bse bla ma བསེ་བླ་མ།
 bse tshang བསེ་ཚང།

bse tshang blo bzang dpal ldan བསེ་ཚང་བློ་བཟང་དཔལ་
 ལྷན།
 bsod nams sgrol ma བསོད་ནམས་སྒྲོལ་མ།
 bsod nams tshe ring བསོད་ནམས་ཚེ་རིང་།
 bstan 'dzin 'jigs med ye shes rnam rgyal བསྟན་
 འཛིན་འཇིགས་མེད་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ།
 bstan 'dzin lung rtogs rgya mtsho བསྟན་འཛིན་ལུང་
 རྟོགས་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 bzhi ba'i smyung gnas བཞི་བའི་སྤྱུང་གནས།
 chab ril ཆབ་རིལ།
 chig bdag ཆིག་བདག།
 chos ra ཆོས་ར།
 chos rgyal nam mkha'i nor bu ཆོས་རྒྱལ་ནམ་མཁའི་ནོར་བུ།
 chu kha ma རྩ་ཁ་མ།
 Dalai Lama, tA la'i bla ma ལྷ་ལའི་བླ་མ།
 dbu mdzad དབུ་མཛད།
 dbyar gnas དབྱར་གནས།
 dbyar lhas དབྱར་ལྷས།
 dbyar ston དབྱར་སྟོན།
 dga' ldan byin chags gling དགའ་ལྷན་བྱིན་ཆགས་གླིང་།
 dga' ldan chos 'phel gling དགའ་ལྷན་ཆོས་འཕེལ་གླིང་།
 dge 'dun rgya mtsho དགེ་འདུན་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 dge bskos དགེ་བསྐྱོས།
 dge lugs དགེ་ལུགས།
 dge slong དགེ་སྤྱོད།
 dge tshul དགེ་ཚུལ།
 dgu mdud དགུ་མདུད།
 dkon mchog nyi ma དཀོན་མཆོག་ཉི་མ།
 dpon po དཔོན་པོ།
 dpon po blo bzang དཔོན་པོ་བློ་བཟང་།
 dpon tshang དཔོན་ཚང་།
 drung chen རྩུང་ཆེན།
 g.yer gshong rin po che གཡེར་གཤོང་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།
 gcan tsha གཙན་ཚ།
 gcan tsha thang གཙན་ཚ་ཐང་།
 gdugs dkar tshe bcu གདུགས་དཀར་ཚེ་བཅུ།

gdugs dkar zlog chen གདུགས་དཀར་ལྗོག་ཆེན།
 gling rgyal གླིང་རྒྱལ།
 gnam rtse lding གནམ་རྩེད་ལྷིང་།
 gnas bstan pa གནས་བསྟན་པ།
 gnya' skya ro rkang tsha གཉལ་སྐྱུ་རོ་རྟམ་ཚ།
 go gnyer གོ་གཉེར།
 gser kha གསེར་ཁ།
 gser kha bla ma གསེར་ཁ་བླ་མ།
 gser kha bsod nams rgya mtsho གསེར་ཁ་བསོད་ནམས་
 རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 gser kha bstan pa rgya mtsho གསེར་ཁ་བསྟན་པ་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 gser kha'i nyag ga གསེར་ཁའི་ཉལ་ག།
 gser kha'i rkang tsha གསེར་ཁའི་རྟམ་ཚ།
 gshong yul གཤོང་ཡུལ།
 gter lung གཏེར་ལུང་།
 gtor ma གཏོར་མ།
 gtor rgyag གཏོར་རྒྱག།
 gtsang bkra shis lhun po གཙང་བརྒ་ཤེས་ལྷུན་པོ།
 gtsos གཙོས།
 gung tshigs གུང་ཆིགས།
 gur mgon tshe brtan གུར་མགོན་ཚེ་བརྟན།
 gzhis kha rtse གཞིས་ཁ་རྩེ།
 hru'u ci རྩུ་ཅི།
 ka ring ཀ་རིང་།
 ka ring sgom sprul ཀ་རིང་སྒོམ་སྤྲུལ།
 kan lho ཀན་ལྷོ།
 kan su'u ཀན་སུ་ལུ།
 kha btags ཁ་བཏགས།
 kha so ཁ་སོ།
 kha so'i nor bu ཁ་སོའི་ནོར་བུ།
 khag dkar ཁག་དཀར།
 khe ci ཁེ་ཅི།
 khri ba ཁྲི་བ།
 khri kha ཁྲི་ཁ།
 khri kha rkang tsha ཁྲི་ཁ་རྟམ་ཚ།

sha bzan ཤ་བཅན།
 si khron སི་ཁྲོན།
 skar ma'i bla ma སྐར་མའི་བླ་མ།
 smyung gnas སྤྱུང་གནས།
 so ba སོ་བ།
 spong bo thar སྤོང་བོ་ཐར།
 ston pa'i tshems gdung mchod rten
 སྟོན་པའི་ཚེས་མཁའ་མཆོད་རྟེན།
 thang ka ཐང་ཀ།
 the bo ཐེ་བོ།
 tho rgya ཐོ་རྒྱ།
 tshe brtan rgyal ཚེ་བརྟན་རྒྱལ།
 tshe tan zhabs drung rje btsun 'jigs med rig pa'i
 blo gros ཚེ་རྟན་ཞབས་རྩུང་རྗེ་བཙུན་འཇིགས་མེད་རིག་པའི་བློ་གྲོས།
 tshod 'dzin rga po ཚོད་འཛིན་རྒ་པོ།
 tshogs 'dus ཚོགས་འདུས།
 tshogs bsags mar khu ཚོགས་བསགས་མར་ཁུ།

CHINESE TERMS

Baita si 白塔寺
 Beijing 北京
 Caoyuan Xingzheng Weiyuan Hui 草原行政委
 员会
 dui 队
 dui zhang 队长
 Foya sheli ta 佛牙舍利塔
 Gangcha 岗察
 Ganjia 甘加
 Gannan 甘南
 Gansu 甘肃
 gongshe 公社
 Guide 贵德
 Haidong 海东
 Han 汉
 Hezuo 合作
 Huangnan 黄南
 Huangsi 黄寺
 Hui 回
 Jianzha 尖扎

tshogs ras ཚོགས་རས།
 til ཐིལ།
 tus ཐུས།
 tus sgrenng ཐུས་སྒྲེང་།
 ya rdzi ཡ་རུའི།
 yam shing ཡམ་ཤིང་།
 yongs 'dzin ཡོངས་འཛིན།
 yungs dkar ཡུངས་དཀར།
 zho phung ཞོ་ཕུང་།
 zho zan ཞོ་བཙན།
 zi ling ཟི་ལིང་།
 zlog chen རྫོག་ཆེན།
 zlog chen bla ma རྫོག་ཆེན་བླ་མ།
 zlog chen gtor ma རྫོག་ཆེན་གཏོར་མ།
 zog pa རོག་པ།
 zon thar rgyal རོན་ཐར་རྒྱལ།

kuaiji 会计
 Maqu 玛曲
 Miaoying si 妙应寺
 Qianlong 乾隆
 Qinghai 青海
 Qishama 齐啥玛
 RMB 人民币
 Salar, Sala 撒拉
 Shuji 书记
 Shunzhi 顺治
 Sichuan 四川
 WeChat, Weixin 微信
 Wendu 文都
 Xiahe 夏河
 Xining 西宁
 Xizang banshi chu 西藏办事处
 Xunhua 循化
 Yonghegong 雍和宫
 Yongzheng 雍正